



THE BROKEN RECORD Assertiveness Skill

is useful when dealing with authorities or strong personalities that are behaving in an unreasonable manner. E.g. a bully or someone who is not paying attention to what we are asking.

It consists in repeating a request, not in a nagging or accusatory manner but as a genuine request. While speaking respectfully we keep asking, as if we haven't asked before, until we get what we need or want. Of course, what we ask has to be a reasonable request. But if we know that the person is in a position and has a duty to grant us our request, no matter what their objections, we just keep asking because this is important.

If normally, we avoid conflict or tend to accept other people's unreasonable behaviour it will take a bit of planning and energy to stand up for what we believe is a reasonable request. We need to choose our battles, but when something is important, this might be the only way forward. Sometimes, this is done in groups. E.g. in Sudan, after 30 years under a cruel tyrant, 7 million people came together on the streets in the capital and peacefully stood there every day for months requesting the dictator to step down and allow a new government take over. A number of people were killed but they kept showing up until in the end, the dictator was forced to step down. The country had stopped functioning, and a new democratic government was put in place by the people.

This is an extreme situation, but perhaps when we are fighting not only on our own behalf but for generations to come, or the underprivileged, we get the strength to keep going in spite of the risks. Whatever we need to be well and happy in ourselves is worth fighting for, as we can't really help anyone else unless we are well and happy in ourselves.

PAUSE and write down something important to you that you need to pursue:

Think about/write down who you need to ask or what you need to do to make it happen:

Write down a plan of when and how to start this process and how to handle the opposition you might meet:

If possible role-play the situation with a friend or colleague to prepare yourself for the resistance you might meet when you start looking for what you need.